

Preventing Falls

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As the body increases with age the risk of falls increases drastically. According to the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2016) “millions of older people, those 65 and older fall. In fact, one out of three older people falls each year” (para # 1). Falling once doubles your chances of falling again. These falls can lead to contusions, fractures, head injuries and possibly a hospital admission which can contribute to higher medical costs. With an increased risk for falls it's important to be aware of risk factors associated with falls, as well as intervention on how to prevent falls from occurring. Here are some facts provided on the CDC website:

- One out of five falls causes a serious injury such as broken bones or a head injury.
- More than 95% of hip fractures are caused by falling
- Over half the falls occur at home

A literature review by Huang et al. (2012) examined risk factors that should be evaluated: muscle weakness and comorbidities related to age, impaired balance, mobility, medication use, poor foot care, unsafe footwear, impaired vision, hearing problems and unsafe environment. It is important to evaluate these and make appropriate modifications. The following are interventions suggested by Health and Human Services Institute on Aging (2016) to prevent falls from occurring:

- Make sure areas are well lit
- Install handrails/Non-slip mats in the tub/tape down loose rugs
- Place things in easier reach/ keep phones low so able to reach if you fall
- Wear appropriate footwear

As the aging population continues to increase it's important to talk to your doctor about your osteoporosis risk and get your vitamin D level. Also, get your vision tested annually, and review your medications at each visit to the doctor (CDC, 2016).

References

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2016). *Home and recreational safety*. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/homeandrecreationalafety/falls/adultfalls.html>

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